



City of Santa Clara
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Santa Clara, CA 95050

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SANTA CLARA, CA

Campaign 2008

Good government begins at the ballot box

‘Vote Ethics’ program builds public trust and confidence in government

Another election season, another reason to Vote Ethics

By Thomas Shanks, Ph.D.

For the third consecutive election season, the City of Santa Clara is asking voters to use the ballot box to hold candidates accountable for conducting political campaigns that can be hard-hitting, but also issue-oriented, honest, fair and respectful.

The City’s Vote Ethics public education outreach is nonpartisan and nonpolitical. It does not tell voters how to vote. Instead, it provides voters with tools to make a candidate’s ethics and values an important part of the voting decision. It encourages voters to look to the candidate’s campaign for evidence of trustworthy leadership, a commitment to the City’s Code of Ethics & Values, and the capacity to lead the City’s Ethics & Values program.

Now in its 10th year, the Ethics Program has earned statewide, national and international recognition for fostering good government and public trust. The program provides elected and appointed officials, City staff and City volunteers with practical skills and training on how to be at their best in their service to residents and in their treatment of each other. Research shows that Santa Clara residents now trust the City more than county, state or federal government, and they have more pride in being Santa Clara residents.

Resident involvement in Vote Ethics is critical to the program’s success. The main message to candidates and their supporters is that residents in Santa Clara pay attention to campaigns and expect candidate claims and criticisms to be based in fact, relevant, and important for voters to know. Voters want solid information so they can make their best choices. They want elected officials they can trust, and they look at campaign conduct for evidence of that.

Vote Ethics also provides voters with tools so they can tell who is conducting a campaign that focuses on issues, qualifications, and vision, not on misleading attacks meant to deceive voters. The program focuses on practical ways to recognize fair and unfair campaigning so that voters have that knowledge before they cast their ballots.

Good government relies on you. Register to vote. Talk with friends about politics, ethics, and what the City needs. Watch and listen to the candidates. Then use what you’ve learned to make your best voting decisions.

Dr. Shanks, a consultant on ethics and past Director of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, has worked with the City of Santa Clara on its groundbreaking ethics program for the past 10 years.



Look for the signs that show you the way to the right choice on Election Day



Evaluate candidate ethics with this checklist

The candidates who foster public trust are those who:

- ☐ Tell the truth about themselves
- ☐ Focus on issues relevant for Santa Clara
- ☐ Tell truths about opponents that are important for voters to know
- ☐ Point out differences between themselves and opponents that are relevant to the political office
- ☐ Treat opponents with dignity and respect
- ☐ Fight fairly and avoid demeaning or irrelevant personal attacks
- ☐ Never try to confuse or mislead voters
- ☐ Clearly identify who is behind any committee that is candidate controlled
- ☐ Take responsibility for any mistakes they make or mistakes made by volunteers or consultants
- ☐ Publicly and forcefully criticize unfair, dishonest or disrespectful attacks on other candidates from any source
- ☐ Keep their promise to conduct an issue-oriented, honest, fair and respectful campaign

City of Santa Clara Code of Ethics & Values

At the heart of the Vote Ethics program is the City’s Code of Ethics & Values. Developed by the community, the Code identifies eight values that demonstrate the highest level of public service and that are fundamental to public trust. The Code guides actions and decisions every day in City Hall.

Ethical
Professional
Service-Oriented
Fiscally Responsible

Organized
Communicative
Collaborative
Progressive

Mark your calendars now!

Candidates Forum
Thursday, Oct. 9
7-9:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, 1500 Warburton
Co-sponsored by the Santa Clara Citizens
Advisory Committee, the Santa Clara Chamber
of Commerce and Convention-Visitors Bureau,
and the Santa Clara Weekly.
Broadcast live on Cable Channel 15.
Videotapes available for checkout in the library.

Monday, Oct. 20
Last day to register to vote in the Nov. 4
election. Voter registration cards are available
in the City Clerk’s Office at City Hall, the library,
and all City fire stations as well as the Registrar
of Voters office, 1555 Berger Dr., San Jose.

Tuesday, Oct. 28
Last day to request a Vote by Mail ballot
from the Registrar of Voters, www.sccvote.org.



The Final Word Candidates Forum
Monday, Nov. 3
7-9:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, 1500 Warburton Ave.
Broadcast live on Cable Channel 15.

Tuesday, Nov. 4
Election Day!

Campaign expenses ...
where does the \$\$\$ go?

Some candidates for City Council in Santa Clara spend more than \$20,000 for their campaign. [See related article about voluntary expenditure limits on page 3.] None of this is public tax money and it is all either given by donors or contributed by the candidate.

In 2006, the successful candidates for City Council spent more than 78% of their campaign fund on direct voter contact such as mailings, brochures, advertisements and websites. The remaining 22% was spent primarily on consulting services, fundraising, office needs and other support costs.

Any surplus money in the campaign account must be spent on a single post-election event or distributed to bona fide tax-exempt charitable, educational, civic or religious non-profit organizations.

For more information about campaign accounts and how campaign funds are spent, visit the City Clerk’s Office in City Hall or the website www.SantaClaraCampaignDollars.org.

The challenge of campaigning

Only a few individuals in any community are willing to commit to public service as an elected official. Serving as a member of the Santa Clara City Council is not a full time job, even though it requires many hours of work each week. Every city relies on elected officials for the democratic process to work, and the residents who step up to shoulder this responsibility should be commended, whether you agree with their viewpoints or not.

Campaigning for elected office is difficult. In a short period of time, with limited funds, each candidate wants to reach every potential voter with persuasive information that results in votes at the ballot box. There are limited ways for candidates to “get the word out.”



- **Ballot statements** – Every voter receives a sample ballot with statements written by each candidate. They are informative, but with a 200-word limit do not go into depth.
Read ballot statements carefully, but remember they provide limited information.
- **Direct mail** – Rising postage costs and a flood of mailers during campaign season can make it difficult for candidates to use letters, brochures and postcards to communicate effectively with voters.
Pay special attention to local campaign mailers, and be sure to note who sponsored them.
- **Yard signs** – Signs can build name recognition, but they are not helpful to voters in learning about the platforms and values of candidates.
Notice candidate names, but make the effort to learn more about what they stand for.

- **Door-to-door** – Candidates and their supporters try very hard to make one-on-one contact with as many voters as possible, a difficult task when there are 45,000 households. They can spend hundreds of hours and walk many miles to knock on doors and talk directly to voters.
Welcome candidates when they come calling – it’s your chance to talk one-on-one about issues important to you.
- **Candidate forums** – The opportunity to hear several candidates at one time is not only convenient for voters, it’s one of the best ways to see how candidates are different from one another.
Attend candidate forums, and listen to what candidates have to say.
- **Candidate meet-and-greet events** – Campaign supporters will frequently host small gatherings so that family, friends and neighbors can meet the candidate of their choice and become more informed about their qualifications and views on important issues.
Take advantage of invitations to meet-and-greet events to become better acquainted with candidates.
- **Robo-calls** – Automated telephone calls with a pre-recorded message from the candidate or a supporter are only legal in California if a live voice is used initially to begin the conversation.
Listen or not, and understand why candidates might choose to use this method to communicate with thousands of voters.
- **Paid advertising** – Ads in newspapers, radio and TV commercials, billboards and other promotions are expensive and provide very little time and space to provide substantive information.

- Let advertising call your attention to a candidate or issue, but do your homework before making your final decisions.**
- **Candidate websites** – These can provide a little information, or a lot, depending on the candidate. They are inexpensive to maintain and can be changed quickly to focus on new issues as they emerge. The League of Women Voters website www.smartvoter.org provides profiles of candidates and can link you to individual candidate websites.
Read websites as you would any paid advertising, remembering the content is from the candidate and it is up to voters to verify the accuracy of the content.
 - **Online blogs** – Blogs can be originated by anyone and say anything. The content is the opinion of the author or authors, and some may be written in an inflammatory way to grab attention.
If you read blogs, you will need to decide if the content is biased or has merit.

It is easy to criticize the campaign tactics of candidates – and many times those criticisms are justified. But voters should also understand how difficult, and how important, it is for candidates to communicate with voters with the limited means available.



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Who’s got a question about elections in Santa Clara?

Q: Does my vote count?

Yes! Yes! Yes! There have been several instances where the gap between the winning and losing candidates came down to a handful of votes. In Vallejo’s mayoral election last fall, only three votes separated the two contenders. And California was admitted into the United States in 1850 by a one vote margin! Every vote counts. Every vote matters. Every vote can make a difference.

Q: What does “non-partisan” mean?

Elected offices in cities are not tied to political parties as they are in state or national elections. Candidates are not required to state their political party affiliation, but they are free to seek endorsements from a political party if they choose. Political parties and special interest groups will often identify candidates in local government races they prefer.

Q: What is the value of an endorsement?

Candidates can spend a lot of time in seeking endorsements in the hopes that voters will feel more confident about a candidate who has been endorsed by an individual, group or newspaper they know and respect. It is up to each voter to determine if an endorsement has value in selecting which candidate to support.

Q: What are slate mailers?

There are two types of “slates,” and each is quite different. Occasionally, candidates with similar positions will campaign and produce materials together, sharing costs. That is one type of slate. More frequently, the slate mailers voters receive during election season list recommended candidates for a variety of elected positions in the region or statewide. These mailers are published by organizations that may represent a special interest, political party, or value system. In most cases, candidates are invited to purchase space on this type of slate mailer, on a first-come, first-included basis.

Q: Do City employees get involved in campaigns?

It is not only unethical, it is illegal for City employees to use City time or resources to support a candidate for political office. City staff members are careful to treat all candidates equally, providing the same access to information to all. City workers may not appear in candidate advertisements or campaign for candidates wearing their uniforms or City identification. City employees have the right as citizens to personally support the candidates of their choice, but only on their own time and with personal funds.

Q: What “teeth” does the ethics program have to make candidates and their supporters be accountable for their actions?

Voters have the absolute power to make accountability the highest priority for candidates. If candidates see that voters will only cast their ballots for candidates who demonstrate their values by running honest, responsible campaigns, that is all the “teeth” the ethics program needs to be effective. The City cannot discipline candidates for unethical campaign practices, but voters can by passing over those candidates who don’t fight fairly.

Running for office costs money... where does the \$\$\$ come from?

Every candidate for public office in California is required to file periodic campaign disclosure statements that list personal financial information and sources of campaign contributions. Any contribution of \$100 or more must include the name, address and employer of the contributor. This allows voters to see who is financially supporting which candidates.

Santa Clara candidates are invited to participate in a voluntary campaign expenditure limit. In 2008, this amount is \$29,889 total for a campaign. If the candidate agrees to stay within the limit, the City pays half of the approximate \$2,000 cost of the candidate’s statement of qualifications printed in the ballot pamphlet. Participating candidates may also accept contributions from a single source of up to \$500, compared to the \$250 maximum from a single source for candidates who do not agree to limit their campaign expenditures.

For information on which candidates are participating in the voluntary expenditure limit, and the campaign disclosure statements of all candidates, go to the website www.SantaClaraCampaignDollars.org.

Read campaign mailers carefully to find their source, judge their content

Many brochures that “endorse” a variety of candidates for different offices are actually paid-for advertising by the candidates themselves.

The group that appears to be mailing the piece usually has a vague name that references family values, public safety, education, the environment, or even a political party. There is nothing wrong with candidates using some of their campaign funds to be part of a co-op mailing with other candidates, but many of these mailers are confusing to voters. Reading the small type will tell a voter a more complete story.

Any individual or organization can send a political mailer or place an advertisement about a candidate, without the candidate’s knowledge or approval.

These efforts do not count in the candidate’s reporting of how much money was spent on the campaign. This type of political marketing is called an “independent expenditure” and its purpose has been to uphold the Constitutional guarantee of free speech while encouraging an active public dialogue about candidates and issues. Requirements that candidates and their campaign workers be totally uninvolved in these efforts are strictly enforced. Unfortunately, independent expenditures have sometimes become vehicles for nasty or misleading “hit” pieces on a candidate’s opponent. Reading the small type will help a voter identify the true source and purpose of each campaign piece.

Most candidates create a committee name to accept contributions.

Often, these committees have names like “Committee to elect ...” or “Friends of ...” The candidate is issued a campaign identity number by the California State Fair Political Practices Commission. Campaign mailers must include the committee name, address, and, preferably, the identity number. Voters can contact the FPPC (see page 4) to clarify who is behind the committee and whether it is controlled by the candidate or another group.

“Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote.”

George Jean Nathan
American journalist
1882–1958



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The privilege of democracy ... the right to vote

Q: Who is eligible to vote in California?

According to the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, the requirements are:

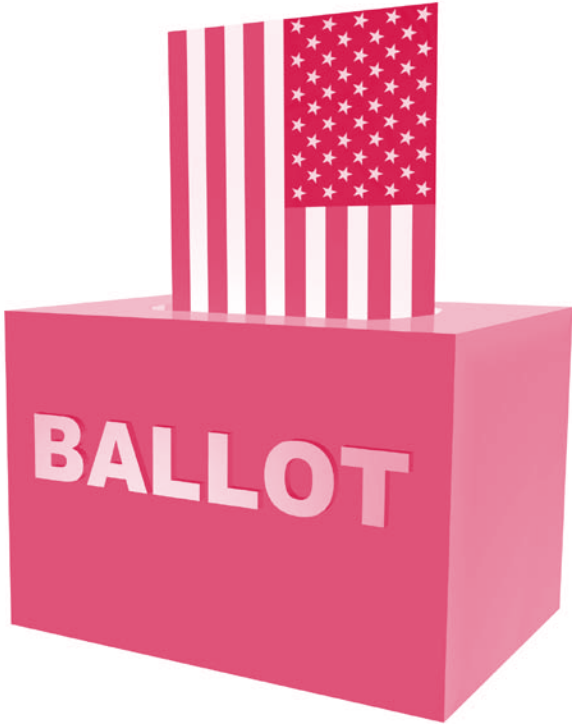
- At least 18 years old by Election Day
- A U.S. citizen
- A California resident
- Registered at least 15 days before the election
- Not in prison or on parole for a felony
- Not declared mentally incompetent by court action

Q: How do I register to vote?

California has postcard registration and the postcards are available at many convenient locations including:

- Registrar of Voters, 1555 Berger Dr., San Jose
- U.S. Post Offices
- Santa Clara City Library and other public libraries
- Santa Clara City Hall, 1500 Warburton Ave., Santa Clara
- Department of Motor Vehicles offices
- Santa Clara City Fire Stations

You may also call the Registrar of Voters at (408) 299-VOTE [8683], or toll free (866) 430-VOTE [8683]. A postcard will be sent to you. Or you can register online through the Office of the Secretary of State at www.ss.ca.gov/elections/votereg1.html.



Q: What information will be required?

- Your first, middle and last names.
- Your residence address, where you live. P.O. boxes, business and mailing addresses cannot be used for your residence address. If you do not have a residence address, contact the Voter Registration Division at (408) 299-8683 for assistance.
- Your mailing address, if different from your residence address. You may receive voter information at any address you designate.

- Your birth date and birthplace (state or foreign country).
- Your California Drivers License or Identification number or the last 4 digits of your Social Security number. As of January 1, 2003, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) added a federal regulation requiring this information for every voter. This information is confidential and is not made public at any time.
- Your political affiliation, if any. If you do not want to be affiliated with party, select "Decline to State." Forms without a party designation will automatically be registered as "Decline to State."
- Your signature.

Q: Who has access to voter registration information?

Voter registration information is available to persons or groups for election, scholarly, journalistic, political, or governmental purposes as determined by the Secretary of State. All requests to view, purchase, or use voter registration information must be accompanied by a written application. Drivers License and Social Security numbers are not shown on any of these publications.

Q: Does registering to vote automatically put me on the list for jury duty?

No. Jury summons are sent randomly to U.S. citizens using a variety of source information, including DMV records. Registering to vote does not increase the likelihood that you will be called for jury duty.

ethical

C a m p a i g n i n g P l e d g e

Both the State of California and the City of Santa Clara ask candidates to sign a voluntary pledge to campaign ethically. The names of candidates who make this pledge are available online at the City's website, www.santaclaraca.gov, and at the City Clerk's Office, City Hall, 1500 Warburton Ave.

Excerpts from the Code of Fair Campaign Practices Pledge signed by candidates

1. I shall conduct my campaign openly and publicly, discussing the issues as I see them, presenting my record and policies with sincerity and frankness, and criticizing the record and policies of my opponent...which merit such criticism.

2. I shall not use or permit the use of character defamation, whispering campaigns, libel, slander or scurrilous attacks on any candidate or his or her personal or family life.

3. I shall not use or permit any appeal to negative prejudice based on a candidate's actual or perceived race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, sex, including gender identity...or association with another person who has any of the actual or perceived characteristics...

4. I shall not use or permit any dishonest or unethical practice which tends to corrupt or undermine our American system of free elections, or which hampers or prevents the full and free expression of the will of voters...

5. I shall not coerce help or campaign contributions for myself or any other candidates from my employees.

6. I shall immediately and publicly repudiate support deriving from any individual or group which resorts, on behalf of my candidacy or in opposition to that of my opponent, to methods and tactics which I condemn...

7. I shall defend and uphold the right of every qualified American voter to full and equal participation in the electoral process.

California's Fair Political Practices Commission

Voters can contact the Fair Political Practices Commission for information on political campaign, lobbying, and conflict of interest laws ... to learn who is funding independent expenditures ... and to file complaints.

1-866-ASK-FPPC
(1-866-275-3772)
www.fppc.ca.gov

Watch 'The Final Word' Forum

Even though an increasing number of voters use absentee ballots that are mailed to the Registrar of Voters days or weeks earlier, there is still a flurry of campaign activity right before Election Day. It is a great time for candidates to make a positive impression on voters before they go to the polls.

Unfortunately, last-minute mailers sometimes have a different purpose – to attack an opponent with unsubstantiated negative charges that the candidate does not usually have time to refute.

The Final Word Forum in Santa Clara on Monday, Nov 3, discourages last-minute "hit pieces" because it guarantees the candidates have the opportunity to present their side of the story on the night before Election Day. It is broadcast on Cable Channel 15.

The advice to voters is to pay extra close attention to campaign materials received at the last minute, especially those that focus on criticizing the opponent rather than presenting the qualifications of the candidate.



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